

# Hunting and Trapping

## Emergency Order

Alaska Department  
of Fish and Game

Under the Authority of AS 16.05.060

**Emergency Order 05-03-21**

Issued at Bethel, Alaska  
May 12, 2021

**Effective Date:** 12:01 a.m.  
May 13, 2021

**Expiration Date:** 11:59 p.m. June 30, 2021

### EXPLANATION:

This Emergency Order opens State of Alaska resident hunting for musk ox that are stranded on free-floating ice floes completely surrounded by salt water in Unit 18. The area affected by this announcement includes coastal marine waters adjacent to muskox populations located on Nunivak and Nelson islands and the Y-K delta Mainland in Unit 18. Residents taking musk oxen from ice floes must meet the requirements of *5 AAC 92.046 Permits for taking incidental or stranded musk oxen*. During the winter season, musk oxen may naturally move from terrestrial habitat to nearby sea ice and become stranded when marine conditions cause ice movements and floes to develop before musk oxen can reach safety. Opening hunting under these specific conditions allows harvest opportunity of animals likely to be lost by drowning. All other muskox hunting regulations in Unit 18 remain unchanged by this emergency order.

### REGULATION:

Therefore, the following regulations in **5 AAC 85.050 (a) (1) HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MUSK OXEN** are superseded by this emergency order using hunt conditions required in **5 AAC 92.046. PERMITS FOR TAKING INCIDENTAL OR STRANDED MUSK OXEN**, as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(1)		
...		
Unit 18		

Up to 2 muskox per person;  
provided: musk oxen are  
stranded on free-floating ice  
floes completely surrounded  
by salt water; the hunter must  
demonstrate the ice floe  
conditions by submitting  
photographic evidence to the  
Alaska Department of Fish and  
Game within 48 hours of harvest

**May 13-June 30**

No open season

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All other musk oxen hunting regulations in Unit 18 remain unchanged by this emergency order.

Doug Vincent-Lang  
Commissioner

By delegation to:



Patrick Jones  
Area Biologist

**JUSTIFICATION:**

At the March 2015 Board of Game meeting in Anchorage the regulations for 5 AAC 92.046. *Permits for taking incidental or stranded musk oxen* were modified, effective July 1, 2015, to allow the Commissioner to authorize the harvest of musk oxen stranded on ice floes by emergency order announcement. The requirements for harvest under ice floe conditions include:

- 1) Season opening by emergency order in Game Management Unit 18;
- 2) Musk oxen are stranded on free-floating ice floes completely surrounded by salt water;
- 3) A resident may harvest the stranded musk oxen without a permit;
- 4) Resident tag is waived (e.g., no tag required);
- 5) Bag limit of up to 2 musk oxen per person;
- 6) The hunter must demonstrate the ice floe conditions by submitting photographic evidence to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game within 48 hours of harvest.

Survey results show that the Nunivak and Nelson Island muskox population are above management objectives. Surveys completed in June 2020 revealed a Nunivak Island population of 701 muskoxen, a level above the management objective of 500–550 musk oxen, and a 2020 survey of Nelson Island minimum population count of 462 musk oxen, also above the management objective of 250–450 musk oxen. Maximized permit hunting has

been implemented by the department to reduce populations to management objectives over a multi-year period. At present, populations can sustain the additional harvest of stranded musk oxen.

For unknown reasons during winter, musk oxen occasionally wander onto sea ice adjacent to their terrestrial habitat. When ice floe conditions occur musk oxen may become stranded and lack sources of fresh water or food needed for survival. Capturing and relocating stranded animals under these conditions would be very costly and extremely difficult logistically. High population status on both islands makes non-lethal relocation of stranded musk oxen back to either island inadvisable based on potential population impacts to range quality. Providing harvest opportunity of stranded musk oxen is a prudent course of action for animals likely to be lost by drowning.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Copies are available from Department of Fish and Game offices in Barrow, Kotzebue and Nome.

1. Lieutenant Governor
2. Assistant Attorney General (Board of Game Liaison, Anchorage)
3. Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game
4. Division of Wildlife Conservation
  - Director
  - Deputy Director
  - Assistant Director
  - Regional Supervisors
  - Regulation Coordination Team
  - Area Offices Statewide
  - Information Management Section, Anchorage, Juneau
  - Web-page Manager, Juneau (electronic copy)
  - Public Information Centers, Anchorage, Fairbanks
5. Division of Boards
  - Boards Support Section, Executive Director
  - Field Offices: Kotzebue
6. Division of Subsistence
  - Assistant Director
  - Program Director, Fairbanks
  - Field Offices: Fairbanks, Kotzebue
7. Public Communications Section, Juneau
8. Department of Public Safety, Fish and Wildlife Protection
  - Director
  - Detachment Commander, Soldotna
  - Field Offices: Coldfoot, Kotzebue, Nome
9. U. S. Department of the Interior
  - Bureau of Land Management, State Director
  - Bureau of Land Management, Northern Field Office
  - Bureau of Land Management, Arctic Team: Fairbanks
  - Bureau of Land Management, Northwest Team: Fairbanks, Kotzebue
  - Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Director
  - Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Federal Subsistence Management
  - Fish and Wildlife Service, Law Enforcement, Fairbanks

- Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Advisory Councils
- North Slope, Chairman
- National Park Service, Regional Director
- National Park Service, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
- 10. Clerk of the Court or Magistrate: Barrow
- 11. Regional Native Corporations /I.R.A. Councils/Traditional Village Councils/Other Gov't
  - Anaktuvuk Pass
  - Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
  - Atqasuk
  - Northwest Arctic Borough, Lands Office
  - North Slope Borough, Department of Wildlife Management
  - Point Lay, Native Village of
  - Wainwright, City of
- 12. News Media:
  - Statewide: APRN
  - Anchorage: Anchorage Daily News, KTUU
  - Barrow: KBRW Radio; Arctic Sounder
  - Fairbanks: Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, KUAC
  - Kotzebue: KOTZ Radio, Arctic Sounder